



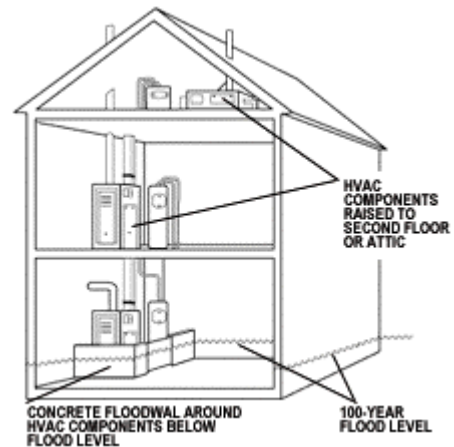
Factsheet: Protection of Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning Equipment

Are You at Risk?

If you aren't sure whether your house is at risk from flooding, check with the **DC Floodplain Manager, (202) 535-2248**. This official can determine whether you are in a flood hazard area. Also, you can request information on how to protect your property from flood damage.

What You Can Do

Flood protection can involve a variety of changes to your house and property -- changes that can vary in complexity and cost. You may be able to make some types of changes yourself. However, complicated or large-scale changes and those that affect the structure of your house or its electrical wiring and plumbing should be completed by a professional contractor licensed to work in the District of Columbia. One example of flood protection is raising the heating, ventilating, and cooling equipment in your house so that it is above the flood level, or surrounding it with a flood wall. A licensed contractor should complete these actions.



Raise or Floodproof HVAC Equipment

Heating, ventilating, and cooling (HVAC) equipment, such as a furnace or hot water heater, can be damaged extensively if inundated by flood waters. The amount of damage will depend partly on the depth of flooding and the amount of time the equipment remains under water. Often, the damage is so extensive that the only solution is replacement.

In floodprone houses, a solution for protecting HVAC equipment is to move it from the basement or lower level of the house to an upper floor or even to the attic. A less desirable method is to leave the equipment where it is and build a concrete or masonry block floodwall around it. Both of these methods require the skills of a professional contractor. Relocation can involve plumbing and electrical changes, and floodwalls must be adequately designed and constructed so that they are strong enough and high enough to provide the necessary level of protection.

Tips

Keep these points in mind when you have your HVAC equipment raised or floodproofed:

- A licensed contractor must correctly complete changes to the plumbing, electrical system, and ventilating ductwork in your house, in accordance with all applicable codes. This is important for your safety!
- If you are having your existing furnace or hot water heater repaired or replaced, consider having it relocated at the same time. It will probably be cheaper to combine these projects than to carry them out at different times.
- Similarly, if you have decided to raise your HVAC equipment, consider upgrading to a more energy-efficient unit at the same time. Upgrading will save you money on your heating and cooling bills. Also, you may be eligible for a rebate from your utility companies.

- If you decide to protect your HVAC equipment with a floodwall, remember that you will need enough space in the enclosed area for system repairs and routine maintenance. Also, depending on its height, the wall may have to be equipped with an opening that provides access to the enclosed area. Any opening will have to be equipped with a gate that can be closed to prevent flood waters from entering.

Estimated Cost

Having your furnace and hot water heater moved to a higher floor or to the attic will cost about \$ 1,500. The cost of a floodwall will depend partly on its height and length. A 3-foot-high wall with a perimeter length of 35 feet would cost about \$1,000.

Contact the District of Columbia Emergency Management Agency, Hazard Mitigation Officer on (202) 673-2101 ext. 1163 for additional information regarding personal preparedness and protection measures.